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THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL:

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All Communications for the Editor should be sent to him at 20, Clifton Crescent, Folkestone. Orders for any of our publications should be sent to the publishing office, 44, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Nonconformist Choir Union.

THE annual Crystal Palace Festival has again been held, and, we trust, was interesting and useful to the many choirs taking part. The universal opinion seems to be that it was the best festival yet held. The singing in all respects was better—precision, light and shade receiving much more attention.

It must be a great encouragement to the committee to know that from almost every locality where the Union is represented come reports that the choir-singing has greatly improved as the result of the work of the Union. The book of music prepared by the committee is in advance of the capabilities of many Nonconformist choirs, but the energy with which these choirs tackle the work, and the attention they evidently give to the necessary preparation is most commendable. The fruit is that these singers are able to undertake the ordinary service music with much more ease, and render it with greater taste. The training absolutely necessary for the Crystal Palace Festival has a great and lasting effect upon their singing.

The Union has now been in existence for ten years, and from the first has "caught on" with much success. We are anxious to see the movement spreading. About 7,000 singers are now in the Union, but we should like to know that this number was largely increased. Hitherto the central committee in London has done very little to start local unions, some musicians on the spot having had the spirit and courage to inaugurate the movement. It would be well if many more provincial friends would endeavour to interest their singers in the work, and form unions, to be affiliated with the central Union. Whether the London committee could not with advantage now take some steps to spread the movement is a matter for consideration. There are reasons why in some localities at least an initiative taken by the London Committee would probably be the best means of developing the work of the Union. By some method or other it seems most desirable that the interest in the Union should be spread far and wide. Any one wishing for particulars and information as to how to proceed should communicate with the Hon. Sec., Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, London, E.C.

A suggestion has been made that the Lancashire and Cheshire choirs (a strong body altogether) should repeat the music of the recent festival in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in the early autumn. If the idea can be carried out it will be a step in the right direction in promoting increased interest in the Union. The question of expense is the chief point for consideration; but judging from the spirit and enthusiasm of these northern choristers when we have had the pleasure of being amongst them, we believe they will not let £ s. d. stand in the way, if that difficulty can in any way be overcome. If every choir would guarantee to dispose of a few tickets there could not be any loss. That such a festival would be a musical success we have not a shadow of a doubt.

Passing Notes.

A KINDLY correspondent asks me to say a word or two upon the subject of organist competitions as a means of securing the best man. It is a well-worn theme, and yet, like the Gospel story, its interest is ever fresh. There is little doubt that when they are properly conducted these competitions are the only good available means. But a competition is by no means a perfect test. Many of the very best men are of a highly-strung nervous temperament and fail to do themselves justice on a single occasion, while many superficial men are as bold as brass and by sheer impudence contrive to create a favourable impression. Then, the tests are sometimes out of all proportion to the salary offered and the duties required, and are often set rather to exhibit the attainments of the examiner than to serve the practical end at which they should really aim. An adjudicator cannot be too careful, both in

observing and allowing for signs of nervousness, and in setting his tests. Then what, it may be asked, about selection by committee and congregation? Well, on that point I would rather say nothing—only this: One does not, in ordinary affairs, select a person to fill any responsible office by means of a miscellaneous and unskilled committee.

In connection with this subject I have asked a well-known organist who often acts as adjudicator what he considers a fair test for such an occasion. He says he would set a man to play a couple of pieces of his own choice; then he would give him a piece to test his sight reading. He would ask him to transpose a hymn-tune, a very necessary but much neglected thing; perhaps to harmonise on paper a short melody; and certainly to show how he would take the choir through a new thing or two. But the main point is this: has the man the faculty of judicious accompaniment? One doesn't want for a church a man who can execute "fireworks" with his hands and feet; nor a man who by his antics is bent on showing the congregation either what a fine organ he has or what a fine organist he is. One doesn't want a man who gives you the fidgets; but a man who will recognise that he is there to *support* his choir, not to supersede them, and who will use only legitimate methods in his accompaniments. No man who has not a thorough knowledge of harmony should venture on what may be called additional accompaniments. And yet, how many do? But there! we are not very much farther than we were at the beginning. A competition seems right enough when it is rightly conducted, but as to the latter condition—well, to quote Hamlet, "there's the rub."

Should the minister or the choirmaster choose the psalms and the hymns for the Sunday services? That is the question they are discussing in a certain Scotch journal. It is impossible to dogmatise on the point, but common experience suggests that each may with benefit have his share in the making up of the lists. Many ministers ring the changes on a few pet hymns, while some choirmasters and organists select only such hymns as will afford best scope for singers or instrument. A growing number of clergymen are content to have the choice of one hymn; and there are a few who simply send the choirmaster the sermon text, and allow him to select the whole of the praise material in keeping with it. This latter is not a bad plan, but it has its difficulties, especially for organists of a non-theological turn of mind—that is to say, for the great majority. Very often a text affords no indication of the minister's line of treatment, and it may happen that the organist takes an entirely different view of the words from that taken by the preacher. At one time when I worked under such a method I remember being staggered by finding on my weekly post-card the following from Job: "There is a path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed it by." When the editor of the NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL finds himself in a

difficulty about the subject of a competition he should ask for a selection of hymns to fit this sermon text! The result would certainly be curious. Seriously, I like to have the choice of my own praise material; and I can declare as the result of a long experience that the parson who makes a fuss about his psalms and hymns is generally a duffer in the pulpit. In fact I regard the test as unailing.

The other day I chanced upon an interview with Sir A. C. Mackenzie, in which something is said about the evidently declining taste for oratorio. The eminent composer, while allowing that oratorio still has its advocates, is constrained to admit that the theatre is monopolising much of the public interest, to the exclusion of the more serious classical works. This, of course, is not said in disparagement of the theatre, which Sir Alexander has hereditary reasons for regarding with some affection. At the same time, there is undoubtedly truth in the remark. M. Saint Saëns imagines that it is only by our "inexhaustible patience" that we tolerate oratorio at all. We "accept boredom as a necessity," and so we listen to our Bach and our Handel for hours upon end, and pretend that we enjoy ourselves. Notwithstanding the Frenchman's compassion, it is a pity that we should not so continue. Bach may be a bit *rococo*, and Handel may be getting obsolete, but both—to say nothing of Mendelssohn—have long set the deepest and noblest strings of the Saxon heart vibrating, and it would be none the worse for the Saxon heart that they should retain their places there. People are being killed by the worries of life and the mad rush after exciting pleasures; a little oratorio now and again would do a world of good as a sedative.

By the way, in this connection I have just been reading an article by Mr. Henry T. Finck, an American critic, in which Handel is made, in vulgar phrase, to "sit down" as a very much over-rated composer. In 1891, says Mr. Finck, Rubinstein gave offence by placing Bach far above Handel, to whom he denied a place in the front rank of composers; and about the same time a great commotion was stirred up in England when the "Dictionary of National Biography" put Handel in the second rank. Handel wrote forty-three operas, twenty-two oratorios, twenty-eight Te Deums, etc., but he bids fair to be remembered by the *Messiah*, as Gounod is by *Faust*. Of course, Mr. Finck has some very severe things to say about this oratorio. He remarks that it would have been abandoned long ago were it not for the religious element connected with it. He points out also that while the *Messiah* is always given at Christmas, only one fifth of it is really appropriate for that season. These "bold words" of Mr. Finck, according to a transatlantic contemporary, will "undoubtedly excite the ire of the English musical journals." Not a bit of it. We are as little concerned about Mr. Henry T. Finck's opinions as we are about the grandmother of Moses.

In a closing paragraph let me say a good word for a capital "Book about Bells" by the Rev. George S.

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Tyack, just published by Messrs. W. Andrews and Co., of Hull. This is likely, from its comprehensive character, to become the standard work on its subject. Mr. Tyack writes very fully on every conceivable point connected with bells—about the invention and history of bells, about bell-founding and bell-founders; about the decorations and inscriptions which have been placed on bells; about bell-ringing and bell-ringers; about the various notable bells of the world; about the sacred and secular uses of bells; about carillons; about belfry rhymes and legends; and so on *ad infinitum*. The book is admirably illustrated, and, altogether, I have had much pleasure in reading it through.

A Reason Wanted.

OUR attention has been called to the case of an organist of an important Wesleyan Chapel in London, who has received from the Trustees notice to terminate his engagement, but who cannot get a satisfactory reply to his enquiry as to the reason for his dismissal. Had this gentleman served the church for a short time only, or had he taken no interest in the work of the church, this silence might, perhaps, be understood. As a matter of fact, however, he has been connected with the church since 1864, and for more than twenty-five years has been working with the choir, first as a member, then as choir secretary and deputy organist, and for the last eleven and a half years as organist and choir-master. In addition to choir work, he holds several other offices in the church and Sunday-school, and he has always been one of the hardest workers in the cause. Surely such a man is entitled to some explanation and reason for the action of the Trustees. As an act of Christian courtesy it seems due to him. The following extracts from the correspondence will explain the exact position:—

Wesleyan Church, _____
21st February, 1898.

DEAR MR. —,—Annexed I beg to hand you copy of resolution passed at the Trustees' meeting, held on Friday evening last, the 18th inst., and in compliance therewith, give you notice of the termination of your engagement with the Trustees as organist and choir-master on the 24th June next, for the reason as alleged, and, with kind regards, am yours faithfully,

(Signed) _____

Sec. to the Trust.

"That the Trustees being desirous to rescind the resolution passed at a meeting held on the 3rd December, 1886, appointing Mr. — organist and choir-master, hereby request the Secretary to give him notice of the termination of this agreement from the 25th of March next, to expire the 24th June, with a view of re-arrangement of the musical part of the church."

The organist replied thus:—

21st May, 1898.

To the Trustees,

Wesleyan Church.

GENTLEMEN,—I have to acknowledge receipt of letter from your Secretary, Mr. —, dated 21st February, enclosing copy of resolution passed at your meeting on 18th February, giving me notice of the termination of my agreement with you as organist and choir-master from the 25th March last, to expire on the 24th June

next, with a view of rearrangement of the musical part of the service of the church.

Meeting your Secretary, and asking him what the Trustees complained of, and what alterations were contemplated, I could not obtain any information beyond the fact that a sub-committee had been appointed to interview me, and report next meeting, but what proposition they would have to make he could not tell me.

I do not now know what it is they want, or what you complain of, and I think (and in this I am supported by others who have heard of your present action) that I have not been treated with that confidence that my long and faithful services should deserve.

I shall be pleased to hear what the complaints are, and what are your wishes for the future. Yours faithfully,

(Signed) _____

The following curt note is the only reply the organist has been able to get:—

Wesleyan Church,
24th May, 1898.

DEAR MR. —,—I am requested by the Trustees to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 21st inst. to them, contents of which are duly noted; and with kind regards, remain yours sincerely,

(Signed) _____

Sec. to the Trust.

The Trustees may be acting within their rights, but as Christian gentlemen it seems as if they ought to be more frank and explicit to another Christian gentleman who has served the church in many capacities for so long a period.

NOTTINGHAM NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.

ANNUALLY, upon the Sunday afternoon preceding the great June festival at the Crystal Palace by the National Nonconformist Choir Union, it is the custom of the Nottingham branch of the organisation to publicly perform at a musical service the whole of the sacred portion of the festival book of music. This service was held on June 12, in the Mechanics' Large Hall, Nottingham. Ald. Anderson Brownsword, president of the local union, occupied the chair, and the officiating minister was the Rev. Francis Marrs, of Shakespeare-street Methodist Free Church, who gave a very interesting and appropriate address. There was a commendably large muster of choristers, practically the whole of the Nottingham contingent, which numbers 500 voices, being present, under the direction of Mr. John Adcock. As upon former occasions, the work of training the singers has been undertaken throughout by Mr. Adcock, who has for so many years evidenced such marked aptitude in regard to the management of large choral bodies. The result of his sound and thorough teaching was abundantly apparent when such exacting and widely different works as Mendelssohn's motet, "Hear my Prayer," and Gounod's "By Babylon's Wave," to say nothing of several anthems, were rendered with signal success. Gounod's splendidly dramatic work was given with an effect which was stirring in the extreme. The choral portions of the Mendelssohnian motet were also treated in a manner which filled the hearers with the liveliest satisfaction. Miss E. M. Farrow sang the solo passages in "Hear my Prayer" with appropriate sympathy. Mr. A. Lakin contributed two solos with considerable effect. Mr. Charles Lynn, the talented organist of the Union, gave a short recital before the service and accompanied with excellent judgment. The collection on behalf of the funds of the Union amounted to £12.



Music at the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Tottenham.

THE parish of Tottenham lies about five miles from London and contains an enormous population of toilers in the great city, who daily crowd the various stations on the Great Eastern Railway, which has done so much of late years to develop the district. Doubtless the very cheap fare offered by the early workmen's trains has been the chief factor in building up the neighbourhood to its present gigantic proportions. Through the midst of it runs one of the principal thoroughfares to the north, known as the Tottenham High Road. Herein stands the Wesleyan Church, close to Bruce Grove Station, its fine spire being a familiar object to the many thousands of travellers who frequent the line to Edmonton and Enfield. The imposing church buildings, with capacious schools in the rear, have been erected about thirty years, and are considered to rank amongst the finest of North London Free Churches. Many of the most prominent Wesleyan ministers have been stationed here, such as the Revs. Dr. Rigg, Hugh Price Hughes, John Bond, Robert Morton, etc. The church is now at the head of the Tottenham Circuit, and is the centre of a great deal of lively Christian work, which is directed in an able manner by the Rev. William Oldfield, who is the resident minister at the present time.

Arriving at Bruce Grove Station on Sunday morning, May 22nd, we found the vicinity of the church occupied by several contingents of the Salvation Army, who were doing their best to "make a joyful noise" after their own particular manner, while

an almost continuous stream of all sorts and conditions of men and women were whirling by on cycles, en route for some spot far from the madding crowd, where, let us hope, the beauties of such a delightful spring morning was some kind of sermon to them.

It was a measure of relief to get away from this din of cornet, drum, cycle-hooter, and shouting, and to pass within the threshold of the sanctuary where one might have a chance of a few moments' peace prior to engaging in the Sunday morning's worship. The interior of the church presented little that calls for special note. It is a commodious building with large galleries all round, and will hold a congregation of 1,000 worshippers. Musical arrangements are evidently considered, as shown by the ample accommodation for the choir provided in a large recess behind the pulpit, from which rises a tier of four or five choir stalls, with the organ backing them up, altogether an excellent location for the musicians, and a great improvement on that in vogue a few years back, when the choir seats were on the floor of the church.

The organ is of fairly good tone; it is a two-manual instrument containing about fifteen stops, and has been well played during the last eight years by the lady whose portrait heads this notice. Miss A. E. Holdom, L.R.A.M., made her debut as a pianoforte soloist at ten years of age, at the Victoria Park Congregational Church, where she took part in concerts for many years. At fifteen she commenced to study the organ with Mr. Willis, and soon after was elected to lead the musical part of the evening services in Victoria Hall, Victoria Park. Following that came her appointment as organist at St. Peter's Church, and afterwards at Mile End Road Congregational Chapel, prior to her present post at Tottenham.

Miss Holdom's career has been a most successful one; she studied with Sir Sterndale Bennett, Sir George Macfarren, Mr. Walter Macfarren, and Mr. Brinley Richards, and took her degrees of Associate Trinity College and L.R.A.M. in 1887, besides obtaining all her sol-fa certificates when very young, under Messrs. Andrew Ashcroft and Joseph Proudman. She has prepared no less than 789 candidates for examinations at the principal academies and colleges of music, and is now head music mistress at the George Green High Schools, besides having a host of private pupils. Organ and piano recitals have been given by her at the Crystal Palace and at various other prominent places in London and the country.

Mr. J. H. Brazendale was formerly choirmaster here for some years; the position has, however, recently been taken over by Mr. C. E. Blackburn, whose portrait we also give. This gentleman has been a member of the choir for nine years, and during most of the time he has acted as hon. secretary. For the past two years Mr. Blackburn has had charge of the music for the Sunday-school anniversaries, the most successful of which was held a few Sundays ago, the special music on that occasion being Mendelssohn's "As the hart pants," Garrett's "The Lord is loving unto every man," Hall's "Praise the Lord, O

Jerusalem," and Woodward's "Radiant Morn." The choir was then augmented and numbered eighty-eight voices, a large portion being elder scholars of the Sunday-school.

Mr. Blackburn is a native of Norwich, and has been connected with choir work from a very early age. Possessing abundant musical enthusiasm, he looks forward to a bright future in his new office, and hopes soon to be able to secure a much larger choir. We learn from him that the present number of choristers is thirty-four, and the music performed during recent years has been of a high standard, including such works as Gaul's "Ten Virgins," Spohr's "God, Thou art great," Mendelssohn's "Thirteenth Psalm," Stainer's "Crucifixion," etc.

Mr. Blackburn says the congregation appreciate good music, but during the usual services they do not care for an elaborate form in which they cannot freely take part, preferring to be acknowledged as a congregation who are fond of singing themselves rather than standing still and listening. Nevertheless, full permission has been given him to introduce occasionally an anthem or other suitable change, and he will use his discretion accordingly, though he says a simple form of service is best adapted to their church.

On the first Sunday morning in each month the Commandments with responses are used, and the Te Deum on the third Sunday.

The annual Choir Festival is usually on some Sunday at harvest time, when the whole of the music is of an appropriate character, with a special musical service on the Monday following. The collections taken at these services are used to defray the choir expenses for the year.

At the service we attended the pulpit was draped in black, it being the first Sunday after Mr. Gladstone's death. The service therefore partook of a memorial character, and was opened by the choir singing the hymn, "Sleep thy last sleep." Mr. Oldfield conducted the service, and said they would be lacking in right feeling if they did not add their humble note of sorrow concerning the passing away of the greatest Englishman of any time. He remarked with much feeling that all political rancour was lost in the towering grandeur of his noble life, and his enemies surpassed even his friends in their eulogies of his lofty character. The whole congregation stood up whilst Miss Holdom played the "Dead March" in true Handelian style, which is, we venture to think, a trifle slower than one is accustomed to hear it nowadays. The old hymn, "Rock of Ages," was also sung and played with a wealth of feeling which gave it a rich significance in the service.

The choir seats showed little spare room, and we were rather struck by the youthful occupants. Several boys' voices were to the fore. Altogether there was a fresh ring about the whole array, and they did capital service in making the congregational singing go really well. A goodly number were present at the service, and all sang with that earnestness and freedom for which Wesleyans are famed. Seldom, indeed, have we listened to better congregational singing than was here displayed.



Of the real merits of the choir proper we unfortunately had little opportunity of forming an opinion, seeing that no anthem, or even chant, was sung. There appears, however, to be sufficient talent to undertake and maintain as good a musical service as we would wish to have in such a church. Certainly Miss Holdom played with an amount of skill and judgment which by no means gave us cause to regret the presence of a member of the fair sex on the organ stool. Her sterling capabilities at the instrument with which she is so familiar, aided by our friend Mr. Blackburn as an enthusiastic choirmaster, who is "keen" on getting a big choir, should go a long way towards making this church a great centre of musical life in such a populous locality.

We trust nothing will be wanting on the part of the church officers in doing their utmost to assist the musical chiefs in this form of Christian Endeavour which is dear to their hearts.

Our Contemporaries.

SIR A. C. MACKENZIE must be getting tired of being interviewed and "biographed." Once more he has been subjected to the process, on this occasion by the *Musical Times*. The best things in the article are really the jokes. Mackenzie, as everybody knows, was sent to Germany for his musical education when he was a youth of ten. When he first arrived in London from the Fatherland, his hair was very long, and as he wore a turban hat, his somewhat feminine appearance aroused the curiosity of the boys in the street, who followed him with attentions more obtrusive than pleasant. In sheer

desperation he made for the first barber's shop he could find in the Blackfriars Road and had his hair cut. The present hirsute covering of Sir Alexander's *caput* is—well, not quite, but nearly like the proverbial billiard ball. "If," he says, pointing to his early photograph, "if I could only finish my career with a head of hair like that, I should die happy." It is a modest ambition. Later on Mackenzie found that he could have done with a little more hair on his face. During his studentship at the R.A.M. he played at nearly every theatre in London, under various conductors. On one occasion he had to take the baton in an emergency, when his youthful appearance called forth the remark that he should grow a beard as soon as possible. Sir Alexander has some diverting stories to tell of his connection with J. W. Davison, the musical critic. After the Norwich Festival of 1884, he called frequently upon Davison, who was living in one of the hotels. The critic used to "come down" about two o'clock in the afternoon and sit over some oysters in the bar till about five. Upon the entry of a jug-laden lady customer, asking for her counter pint of thorough Bass, Davison, pointing to Mackenzie, remarked, "Susan, don't you know who this is? This is the composer of *The Rose of Sharon*. Nothing like it since *Elijah*." When the name of Wagner was mentioned, Davison would exclaim "Police! police!" Mr. Edwards has excelled himself in the matter of puns. They make a very welcome offset to Mr. Joseph Bennett, who here expresses his fear that he will not live to see Music once more clothed and in her right mind.

* *

The *Musical Herald's* biographical article deals this month with Mr. J. L. Roeckel, a son of the Roeckel whose sister excited the tender fancy of Beethoven. Mr. Roeckel is probably known best as a writer of songs. There are some 350 entries under his name in the British Museum catalogue, filling fifty-four pages, but it seems that he disowns a certain number of the entries. Mr. Roeckel is a careful man of business, and his forty years' experience of publishing cannot fail to interest young composers. "I published first on my own account," he says, "because I could not get a publisher to buy my work. This met with the usual result: the things lay on the publisher's shelves. I do not recommend this plan at all. The young composer will do better to give his work to a publisher in return for some copies. This, at least, will cost him nothing, and if his work is good, the publisher will have done something to make his name. As I became known, I sold my works for a lump sum; then I accepted royalties, which of course are still running. Now I have to some extent reverted to the earliest plan of all—printing my works myself and getting a publisher to distribute them and render an account to me. I have even bought back, at publishers' auctions, some of my works that have succeeded. Doing this when you have a public reputation is of course an entirely different thing from doing it when you are unknown. One hears a good deal said against publishers, but I feel a great amount of sympathy with them. In the majority of cases, they undertake considerable risks, and they certainly ought to make good profits." Mr. Roeckel says he receives

hundreds of songs every year, and has long had to use a printed form, declining with thanks. For the most part the verse writers who send him their wares need experience in the special line of writing for music. They don't know where to make the climax; there should be a steady *crescendo* in the thought and intensity of the verse. The point is worth noting.—Mr. Curwen's "editorials" deal mainly with Mr. Gladstone's musical tastes and leanings. The circumstance is recalled that Hullah dedicated his "History of Modern Music" to the deceased statesman.

* *

Musical Opinion has a great objection to municipalities interfering with music. We have all heard of the huge Sydney Town Hall organ. We have also heard of the official organist, M. Wiegand, who used to be organist at St. Peter's Church, Hatton Garden. This gentleman has been in some trouble with the city authorities. What the trouble is exactly I am not prepared to say; but our friend of the blue cover has a very full report of some lively proceedings connected therewith, and this is the heading stuck over the report:

Showeth how some City Fathers Stole the Ratepayers' Money to Build a Mighty Organ, and how they subsequently Differed with the Organist thereof—And also Showeth Forth that Municipalities, being often only Butchers at the Best, cannot Manage Musical Matters; and if they Could, they Should not—Further, the following Droll Proceeding Setteth Forth an Object Lesson to all Peddlings (Much and Little) to Stick to their Lasts, and so abstain from Attempting to do that which can only be Properly and Economically Done by the Unfettered Enterprise and Skill of the Individual Burgesses and Citizens.

Quite in the American style! M. Wiegand, I gather, gets £500 a year at Sydney. He does not think it an extra good salary, and quotes the case of Mr. Frederic Archer, who gets £800 at Pittsburg. M. Wiegand gets £90 as organist of St. Peter's Church. He declares that there are no good organists in Australia but himself! M. Wiegand seems to be a funny gentleman altogether.

* *

The *Musical Record* shows its appreciation of the first volume of Professor Prout's new work on the orchestra by devoting eight columns to a review of it. In this volume the Professor has dealt only with the technique of the instruments; in the next volume he proposes to discuss balance of tone, orchestral colouring, combination, contrast, the accompaniment of voices, and "many other points." There seems every reason to believe that when the book is completed it will be the finest work on orchestration in the English language. A little article of less than two columns deals with Chopin and his interpreters. Among modern pianists there are two who have won special fame as Chopin players—Pachmann and Paderewski. It is easy to feel that both these remarkable performers are in special touch with the composer; to explain this is, however, quite another matter. Temperament, early training, environment have, no doubt, much to do with it; but there must be some special spell exerted over them by the music beyond the ken of reason to discover, and of which they themselves are probably unconscious. It does not matter much, perhaps. "One star differeth from another in glory."

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

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ONWARD, SOLDIERS TRUE!

Choral - March.

ARTHUR BERRIDGE.

Tempo di marcia.

ACCOM. *p* *mf* *f*

The piano accompaniment is in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. It begins with a piano (*p*) introduction, followed by a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section with triplets, and ends with a forte (*f*) section also featuring triplets.

Soprano.
Contralto.
Tenor.
Bass.

March, march on ward, sol-diers true, Take thro' clouds and mist your way, Yon-der flows the
font of life, Yonder dwells e - ter - nal day, March tho' my-riad foes are nigh,
For-ward till we reach the shore; Then when all the strife is done, Rest in peace for

The vocal staves are arranged in four parts: Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are written below the staves. The music is in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The vocal parts enter with the first line of the chorus, followed by the piano accompaniment. The second line of the chorus is also followed by the piano accompaniment. The third line of the chorus is followed by the piano accompaniment. The fourth line of the chorus is followed by the piano accompaniment.

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BRIDGE.

ows the

nigh,

ce for

p *cresc.* *f*

e-vernore. Hark, hark, loud the trumpet sounds, Wake, ye children of the light,

p *cresc.* *f*

Time is past for sloth and sleep, Wake, and arm you for the fight! Time is past for sloth and sleep,

accel. e cresc. *ff*

Wake, and arm you,

accel. e cresc. *ff*

rall. *a tempo*

Wake, and arm you for the fight! Spear and sword each warrior needs, Foes are round you, friends are few,

rall. *a tempo*

rall. *a tempo*

Faint not, tho' the way be long, Fainting, still your way pursue.

Più moderato.

Basses and Tenors.

mf Go, thou mighty— Gospel,

mp *R.H.*

Conquering on thy way, — Night up — on the mountains changes in-to day: —

f *cresc.*

Contraltos.

I — dols bow be-fore Thee; Heathen temples fall; — Soon the

mf *cresc.*

ff *f* *Sopranos.*

world shall own Thee Vic-tor o - ver all. — O Thou blessed Saviour,

ff *mf*

f *Sopranos and Contraltos.*

Reigning now on high, — May Thy faith-ful sol - diers Find Thee ev - er

Basses and Tenors.

5

nigh! — 3 3 Bid their glo - rious mis - sion Speed from sea to

sea, Till the whole cre - a - tion Wor - ship on - ly

Tempo primo.
Thee.

See, see yon - der shines your home, Gates of pearl, and, walls of gold,

Joy that heart hath ne - ver known, Bliss that tongue hath ne - ver told;

6

ff

Victors then through Christ your Lord, Gathered round His glorious throne. Be it yours to

ff

sing His praise, Praise that He your King shall own. Praise, praise Him, who reigns on high,

Praise the co-e - ter - nal Son, Praise the Spirit Lord of Life, Praise the blessed Three in One,

mf cresc.

mf accel. e cresc.

accel. e cresc.

ff *rall.* *ff* *a tempo*

Praise the Spirit, Lord of Life, Praise the blessed Three in One; Praise Him, ye who

ff *rall.* *fff a tempo*

cresc. *rall.* *fff a tempo*

toil and fight, Praise Him, ye who bear the pain, As the sound of

mighty seas Pour your ev - er - lasting psalm. Praise Him, ye who bear the

rit. Praise Him, ye who bear the palm *rall.* Pour your ev - er - last - ing
psalm, praise Him, ye who bear the palm

psalm.
divisi

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No. 3.



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wrote the Apostle. The glory of Pachmann and Paderewski is to have revealed to us in fullest measure the genius of the Polish composer.

* *

The *Lute* returns to the question of the much-vaunted influence of conductors on their orchestras. Stress is laid upon the fact that the inter-reliance engendered by constant association is invaluable in the education and artistic development of an orchestra. Even in amateur societies, such as the "Stock Exchange" and the "Strolling Players," any praiseworthy achievements are fully as attributable to the assiduity of the members as to the conductors. In fact conductors are schoolmasters if they wish to do any good; their influence must be shown at rehearsals, if any; and such rubbish as "working up a crescendo" and "hushing the orchestra to a whisper" is exploded to-day when we know that 75 per cent. of the players have their eyes fixed on their books, and endeavour to play their notes conscientiously whether the conductor tears his hair out or not. It is high time that this gigantic *blague* of conductors should be exposed. Some conductors, the best, are very quiet; others, like the late M. Jullien, seem to pose in the interest of their audience rather than of their band. M. Lamoureux originally came over here with his French orchestra, and we all said: "How beautiful!" Now he conducts the Queen's Hall band, and the result is rather better than before!

H.

The Nonconformist Choir Union Festival at the Crystal Palace.

(By a Special Reporter.)

DURING the several years of existence so brilliantly maintained by this excellent association, it has been an ever increasing pleasure to chronicle the success of its annual festivals. In writing of the tenth festival, held on June 18th, we recall the time of the Union's formation, and feel it to be a matter for very great satisfaction that its conception has been crowned by such genuine and useful results. Nor has the parent institution cause to glory in itself alone, for is there not offspring to be found in the ever-growing number of provincial unions? That the forces under its banner are ever multiplying is proof positive of the need of such an excellent agency in the musical life of Great Britain.

Many have been the willing helpers who have worked, not only with exemplary zeal, but without any semblance of fee or reward in attaining such splendid results as have been achieved.

To Mr. T. R. Croger, the esteemed Hon. Sec., is due the most heartfelt and sincere gratitude for his magnanimous and untiring effort in so cheerfully bearing the heat and burden of the colossal amount of secretarial work which he has discharged so efficiently since the formation of the Union. It is not too much to say that by his genial manner and his splendid all round qualities he has endeared himself to all his fellow-workers. In this affection may he find a measure of reward that shall encourage him in pursuing such self-sacrificing labours.

It is pleasing indeed to note the continued eagerness and enthusiasm which our country cousins display in these festivals. What sturdy constitutions some of them must possess! Only a keen love for the work

could make it possible for them to undergo the fatigue of travelling the whole of two nights in order to join the multitude on the Handel Orchestra.

Railway companies seem thoroughly alive to the importance of the movement, for we hear of some twenty or thirty "trips" from all parts of the provinces—one of them from Glasgow, even—being run on behalf of festival visitors.

Over 7,000 books of music, including 1,000 sol-fa copies, were distributed this year; an innovation made by the introduction of specially bound copies at a trifle extra cost appears to have found favour in the eyes of many. The selection of items ranks amongst the best ever put forward by the Executive Committee, and doubtless will be found a valuable addition to choir libraries throughout the churches, where surely the good influences of the Union's work must very materially affect the standard of musical endeavour.

The "Clerk of the Weather" must have a warm corner in his heart for the Union, in that he never fails to provide suitable climatic conditions for the gathering together of the "clan." This year was no exception to his kindness, for brilliant summer sunshine made glad the hearts of all, though perhaps had old King Sol's rays through the Crystal Palace glass been a little more merciful no one would have objected.

A quick train landed us at the Palace just in time for the Choir Competition, to which we listened with much satisfaction and pleasure. Of the merits of the competitors Dr. Turpin will speak with authority elsewhere. Be it ours to heartily congratulate Lancashire on carrying off the prize shield two years in succession—last year Stacksteads, and this year Littleborough. Were not those Lancashire lads and lasses just a-bit exhilarated over their triumph! They fairly danced round the hall with delight. We should like to have been present at the United Methodist Free Church, Littleborough, on the following Sunday morning, and to have joined in the excitement and glory attending the return of the conquering heroes.

But some felt regret that there was not another prize. Many were heartily sorry for some of the other choirs, they sang so exquisitely; we trust, however, that Dr. Turpin's encouraging remarks to the non-winners will be some compensation to them for the hard work and time they put into their studies. Truly it was, as Dr. Turpin said, a "noble" competition, and reflected abundant evidence of the immense improvement effected by the Union. The test piece was Mr. Maunder's anthem, "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem." It served the purpose admirably, and will surely become popular "in choirs and places where they sing."

We must now proceed to notice the great concert which forms the climax of the year's doings.

The programme was as follows:—

Anthem, "Christ is Risen" (J. V. Roberts).

Anthem, "By Babylon's Wave" (Gounod).

Salomé's Song, "I Rejoice in my Youth" ("St. John the Baptist"), (Sir G. A. Macfarren).

Madame Kate Cove.

Anthem, "Sing, O Heavens" (H. Davan Wetton).

Overture ("St. John the Baptist"), (Sir G. A. Macfarren).

Motett, "Hear my Prayer" (Mendelssohn).

Madame Kate Cove and Choir.

Anthem, "I will Sing of the Mercies" (Darnton).

(This anthem won the prize offered by the Union.)

Presentation of Prizes.

Part Song, "O gentle wind" (Berridge).

(This part song won the prize offered by the Union.)

Song, "Let me dream again" (Sullivan).

Madame Kate Cove.

Part Song, "Rest thee, my little one" (Facer).

Overture, "Ruy Blas" (Mendelssohn).

Chorus, "Oh! the flowery month of June" (Jackson).

Part Song, "Homeward" (Leslie).

(Selection by the prize choir.)

Part Song, "Ye Mariners of England" (Pierson).

Let it be stated with emphasis at the outset that in every way the concert was a great success, the verdict all round being that it was far and away the best performance ever given by the choir. The massive orchestra was well nigh full, except at the off corner on the tenor side. To look at such an imposing array of musical forces is in itself thrilling, but to listen to the grand volume of tone produced by them is to have one's whole being enthralled by the magic power of sound. Thus it was in the opening anthem, when the great choir told out with such majestic force "Christ is risen from the dead." In writing the music of this Dr. J. V. Roberts must have felt the meaning of his text very fully, with the result that we have this inspiring setting thereof. The anthem was peculiarly suited to the capabilities of the choral array, and it made a grand opening item.

In "By Babylon's Wave" we should have liked to have hushed the voices down to a "pianissimo," such as never seems forthcoming from them. This is what yet has to be learnt by the choir. It is quite possible of achievement, even with such a large number of singers. Here of course the need of a full rehearsal comes in. If somehow that could be arranged the results would be different. Our musical army must look seriously to this matter and try to remedy the failing. The basses asserted themselves splendidly in the lead "O Lord, though the victor command," and the fugue went quite steadily and well on to the tumultuous chorus, which was declaimed with tremendous power. After this it was a delightful change to welcome Madame Kate Cove, who looked as dainty and fresh as a spring flower. "Salomé's Song" suited her bright, clear voice admirably, and the air was given with charming effect. Few sopranos possess such a rich musical voice as Madame Cove. She was all that could be desired in "Hear my Prayer," and also in her later song, "Let me dream again." For each she received hearty recalls, which would have meant big encores, but really it was hard work to applaud on such a hot afternoon. Madame Cove has been brought up in quite a hotbed of Nonconformity, and it may safely be asserted that this fact added considerable interest and pleasure to those who listened to her really beautiful singing.

The young English composer, Mr. H. Davan Wetton, organist at the "Foundling," must have felt pleased with the fine rendering given to his anthem, "Sing, O Heavens." This was a very popular number, and deservedly so. It will be heard many times and oft in English chapels during the next twelve months. Much the same may be said of Mr. Darnton's prize anthem, which the choirs took up with special interest. In this the additional force lent by the orchestra was highly effective, and the finale was perhaps the most gigantic body of tone ever given out by the forces of the Union. It was well-nigh overpowering, and made our very bones thrill with emotion. The middle movement of the anthem was taken too heavily to be thoroughly effective; this would have been better in the hands of a semi-chorus or quartett.

In "Hear My Prayer" the choirs were going over familiar ground, and made good use of their opportunity, the rendering throughout being very good.

The part-songs mentioned in the programme all went off in good style, "The Flowery Month of June" coming in for more applause than the others. "Ye Mariners of England" seemed well in season just now, while "battles are raging loud and long." The choristers went for it in grand form, though they must

have been terribly tried by the atmospheric conditions surrounding them.

Throughout the whole concert there was a marked improvement upon the efforts of previous years. Oftentimes before we have had some awkward slips, when the conductor's resources have been strained to the utmost to prevent disaster. Nothing of the kind occurred this time, however, thanks in no small measure to Mr. Minshall's broad, steady beat.

Two selections were given by the combined orchestras of the Crystal Palace and the N.C.U., under Mr. Croger's conductorship, viz., the overture to "St. John the Baptist" in the first part, and Mendelssohn's overture "Ruy Blas" in the second part. Both were excellently given, and much enjoyed by singers and audience.

This notice would not be complete without some kindly reference to the organist, Mr. Arthur Briscoe, who seems quite to have recovered from his long illness of last year. It is no mean task to play that "box of whistles" with proper effect, and that he did so well, says much for his ability.

The Coventry Union (ably conducted by Mr. C. Matthews) gave a capital concert in the Kosary in the evening, consisting of solos and part songs. A goodly number rallied round to listen to their able performances, but signs of a tempest scattered those who had no umbrellas, and so the number of listeners was smaller than might have been otherwise. Several members of the N.C.U. Orchestra assisted in the accompaniments, and altogether the concert was of a high order of merit. We regret space will not allow us to give the capital programme. A word in praise is due to Miss Annie Smart, who is really a good singer. We hope the outdoor concert idea may be developed.

In the general conduct of affairs connected with the Festival most hearty thanks must be tendered to Mr. Blandford (the treasurer), also to Mr. Cowley, who is always so cheerfully to the fore in conducting the competitions, together with our friend, Mr. Clark, who looked the picture of good health, fresh from his American trip. Last, but not least, thanks are due to Mr. Oram and his fellow-stewards, who took charge of the singers on the orchestra. One and all have great cause to be abundantly satisfied in that the concert of 1898 was so eminently successful, and that the Union continues its good work with marked prosperity.

DR. E. H. TURPIN'S REPORT ON THE COMPETITION.

The test pieces included Mr. Maunder's effective anthem, "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem," selected by the committee, and it was not without interest that two of the slower movements, an *andante* chiefly for soprano solo and the picturesque setting of the words, "The valleys stand so thick with corn, etc.," simple as they were by comparison with the rest of this clever work, should have provided test movements of special interest in every case.

The first choir was that of the Green Mount Church, Tottington; choirmaster, Mr. Joshua Knowles. Before proceeding it may be well to state that the heads under which judgment was administered were: intonation, retention of pitch, especially the "time" as selected and duly maintained, the phrasing of the sentences, the observance of signs of expression, the artistic regard to the character of the pieces sung, and the general effect produced in each case. To this remark may be added the observation, each choir selected the second piece required. Further, it may be stated that generally the *ad libitum* selection was very judiciously made; though in one or two cases choirs handicapped their efforts by selecting pieces of inferior workmanship, or unsuitable as regards compass

of parts, etc. To resume, the first choir did admirably as regards the conception of character and the phrasing of sentences; though the voices were too much forced in the *forte* parts, a common fault, frequently exaggerated by forgetfulness of the fact that the *forte* medium depends upon surrounding conditions, and is not the same in soft and slow movements as in vigorous *allegro* sentences. This choir succeeding best in the part-song forming the second piece, secured seventy-six marks out of a possible maximum of 100.

The second choir was that of the Union Street Wesleyan Church, Maidstone; choirmaster, Mr. A. Herbert Startup. Their performance of some passages of the anthem was too impulsive in time and phrasing. The intonation was faulty, and the louder passages lacked fullness and breadth of tone. On the other hand, the andante movement, though effective in parts, was somewhat weak in effect. This choir gained sixty marks.

The third choir to ascend the orchestra was that of the Queen's Road Wesleyan Church, Northampton; choirmaster, Mr. Joseph Rogers. This excellent body of voices at once showed a good vocal style. The soprano solo passage displayed good tone qualities. The *forte* effects were not too forced. Intonation was, however, defective at times. The spirit of the moderate to the words, "The valleys," was seriously misconceived, and the movement was too slow, and lacked character and brightness. Generally the balance and character of tone was good. This choir secured seventy marks.

The fourth choir was the well-known Stacksteads Wesleyan Choir, holding the Challenge Shield; choirmaster, Mr. John Holden. This fine choral force displayed excellent intonation, though the andante of the anthem wanted warmth of expression at times. As regards tone and conception of character of movements this choir was excellent, and gained eighty marks.

The fifth choir was the admirable choral force, the choir of the United Methodist Free Church, Littleborough, Lancashire; choirmaster, Mr. J. H. Consterdine. From the first this association displayed those marked powers which go to make fine singing. Perhaps the comparative weakness in effect of the contralto part was the point at first view most open to criticism. Artistic power and a faculty for just expression were constantly to be noticed. Though there was in the part song a slight loss of pitch, the sense of good "time" was everywhere present, and the effects were admirably vocal. This choir gained ninety-two marks, and gained the prize with very great credit to themselves and their conductor.

Choir No. 6 was that of the Primitive Methodists of Gainsborough; choirmaster, Mr. G. H. Smithson. The performance of this, in many respects, admirable choir, displayed a common defect, forced *forte* tones with exaggerated accentuation. The Andante, though sung with much feeling, was distinctly too slow, and some passages of the anthem lacked perception as to their true character. This choir gained sixty marks; though their merits were not all on the same lines as those of Choir No. 2, gaining the same numerical reward.

Choir No. 7 was that large and fine body of voices, the Rushden Old Baptist Chapel Choir; choirmaster, Mr. Joseph Farey. The performances of this force displayed the too common modern errors of disfiguring the harmony by over-emphatic accents, and a style of phrasing which may be described as too assertive at times, and as rather instrumental than vocal in effect; consequently the tones produced were harsh at times. The "andante" of the anthem was too slow. "The valleys" movement was very nicely rendered. Though the harmonies were not always in tune, the choral effects of this fine choir were often very striking. This

choir, gaining eighty-four marks, practically stood second on the list.

The general criticism upon the performances of these really exceptionally fine choirs may be expressed thus: want of well-produced vocal tones, especially as regards "breathing" power, and an aptitude to exaggerate certain effects, especially in the *forte* tone medium.

The details of management of the competition were the most perfect and punctually carried out of any I have experienced. The competition was, artistically, one of a very high order, reflecting great honours upon all the choirs and their able, painstaking conductors.

The following choirs took part in the Festival:

METROPOLITAN CHOIRS.

Anerley—Congregational.
Battersea—Battersea Park Baptist.
Bow—Harley Street Congregational.
Brondesbury.
Buckhurst Hill—Wesleyan.
Camden Town—Park Chapel.
Chingford—Congregational.
City—City Temple.
Clapton—Downs Chapel.
Crouch Hill—Presbyterian.
Dalston—Wesleyan.
Dulwich, E.—Lordship Lane Baptist.
East Ham—Plashet Park Congregational.
Edmonton, Lower—Independent.
Finsbury—Whitefield Tabernacle, City Road.
Fulham—Dawes Road Congregational.
Highbury Hill—Baptist.
Hendon—Congregational.
Holloway—Caledonian Road Congregational.
Holloway, Upper—Baptist; Junction Road Congregational.
Honor Oak—Baptist.
Hornsey Rise—Baptist.
Kingsland—Congregational.
Lavender Hill—Victoria Baptist.
Lewisham—Congregational.
Limehouse—Coverdale Congregational.
Millwall—Trinity Congregational.
Norwood, S.—
Orange Street—Congregational.
Paddington—Craven Hill.
Peckham—Avondale, Unitarian; Queen's Road Wesleyan; South London Tabernacle.
Plumstead—Plumstead, Common Wesleyan; Robert Street Primitive Methodist.
Ponder's End—Congregational.
Regent's Park Chapel.
Richmond—Duke Street.
Southwark—Southwark Park Wesleyan.
Stoke Newington—Wesleyan.
Stockwell—Baptist.
Stratford—Trinity Presbyterian.
Sydenham—Baptist.
Tottenham—High Cross Congregational; Wesleyan.
Walthamstow—Trinity Congregational; Wood Street.
Walworth—Walworth Road Baptist; York Street.

PROVINCIAL NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNIONS.

Burton-on-Trent.	Ipswich.	Rushden.
Coventry.	Kettering.	Sandy.
Chepstow.	Liverpool.	St. Neots.
Folkestone.	Nottingham.	Stockport.
Hadleigh.	Oldham.	Walsall.

PROVINCIAL CHOIRS.

Addingham—Mount Hermon Wesleyan Reform;
Wesleyan.
Amphill—Union Chapel.

Burnley—Bethel Primitive Methodist; Ebenezer Baptist, Colne Road.
 Bamford—Congregational.
 Barnoldswick—Wesleyan.
 Birmingham—St. Andrew's Road; Selly Oak Primitive Methodist; Sparkbrook Baptist, Stratford Road.
 Blackpool—Alexandra Road Congregational; Union Baptist; Shaw Road U.M.F.C.
 Brierfield—Baptist; Wesleyan.
 Bromley—Baptist.
 Colne—Albert Road Wesleyan; Langroyd Road Wesleyan.
 Compstall—Wesleyan.
 Darlaston—Primitive Methodist.
 Denford—Wesleyan.
 Denton—Hope Congregational; Trinity Wesleyan; United Methodist Free Church.
 Desborough—Congregational.
 Epping—Wesleyan.
 Feltham—Christian Union Choir.
 Gainsborough—Primitive Methodist.
 Glossop—Littlemoor Independent; Wesleyan Circuit; Primitive Methodist; Princes' Street Mission.
 Grimsby—United Methodist Free Church.
 Harpole—Baptist.
 Heywood—Bridge Street Primitive Methodist; Wesleyan and Hopwood U.M.F.C.
 Hollingworth—Congregational; Methodist New Connexion.
 Hyde—Newton Wesleyan; Norfolk Street Wesleyan; Union Street Congregational.
 Irthlingborough—Baptist.
 Keighley—Alice Street Primitive Methodist; Cross Roads Primitive Methodist; Ebenezer; West Lane Primitive Methodist; Worth Wesleyan.
 Kissingbury—Baptist.
 Langley Mill—Eastwood Congregational.
 Liscard—Congregational.
 Littleborough—Primitive Methodist.
 Maidstone—Union Street Wesleyan.
 Manchester—Hatherlow Congregational.
 Morton—Congregational.
 Nelson—Cooper Street Wesleyan.
 New Brighton—Wesleyan.
 New Malden—Congregational.
 Newton Abbot—Congregational.
 Norbiton—King Street Congregational.
 Northampton—Mount Pleasant Baptist; Queen's Road Wesleyan; Scarletwell Street Wesleyan Mission; Victoria Road Congregational.
 Otley—Wesleyan.
 Oxenhope—Horkinstone Baptist.
 Rochdale—Bagsdale United Methodist Free Church; Facit Wesleyan; Hollows United Methodist Free Church; Lowerfold United Methodist Free Church; Molesworth Street Methodist New Connexion; Moore Street Congregational; Shawclough Zion Primitive Methodist Chapel; United Methodist Free Church, Mitchell Street; West Street Baptist; Zion Baptist.
 Ringstead—Baptist; Wesleyan.
 Royston—Kneesworth Street.
 Rushden—Park Road Wesleyan.
 Sale—Congregational Church.
 Saundersfoot—Baptist Choral Union.
 Sheffield—Bethel.
 Silsden—Primitive Methodist.
 Skipton—Water Street Wesleyan.
 Sowerby Bridge—Steep Lane Baptist.
 Stackstead—Wesleyan.
 Staines—Congregational.
 Stalybridge—Wesleyan.
 Sutton-in-Craven—Baptist.
 Swadlincote—Baptist.

St Mary Cray—Temple Congregational.
 Todmorden—Patmos Congregational.
 Tonbridge—Wesleyan.
 Tottington—Greenmount Congregational.
 Walsall—Goodall Street.
 Waltham Cross—Paradise Row Baptist.
 Warwick—Brook Street Congregational.
 Whitworth—Hallfold Congregational.
 Windsor—Baptist.

Our Country Choirs and their Difficulties.

BEFORE we can hope to write with any measure of effect upon a given topic it is absolutely necessary that we should possess a thorough knowledge of our subject and be in complete sympathy with it. But as both these qualities imply experience, the writer of this article feels that he ought to state at the outset what practical acquaintance with his subject he possesses. Fortunately for him, as regards this connection, he held for nearly five years the unremunerative appointment of organist and choirmaster of a small Nonconformist church in a remote country district, consequently all the statements he may have occasion to make may be relied upon as being the outcome of actual observation.

Like mankind in general a country choir is born to trouble, the formation of such a body being in itself a task of considerable difficulty. For by the expression country choir we do not mean *any* provincial choir, but a choir located in an entirely rural and more or less agricultural district, remote from and entirely independent of the large centres of industry and manufacture. In such a district it is hard work to get together any voices at all, to say nothing about their quality, for there is a constant exodus of young people to the towns and cities, thus limiting the choirmaster in his selection of recruits and rendering the efficiency of his choir anything but an unvariable quantity. And even those who remain, supposing they have the advantage of youth upon their side, are not always the best subjects for vocal training. Too often the exhausting nature of their daily labour, together with the exposure to which they are subjected in the prosecution of the same, renders their voices harsh and unmusical, while the want of educational facilities militates against expression and refinement in their singing. The influence of the State Church, which is, as a rule, paramount in country villages, induces those parents who have an eye to the loaves and fishes to eschew the Nonconformist Sunday-school. Consequently the attendance at the latter suffers, and the Nonconformist choirmaster finds his area of selection still further limited. His choir is therefore not likely to be a large one, so he will have to learn, as we had once to learn, how to produce the maximum of effect with the minimum of material.

But in postulating the existence of a choirmaster we have, as the country proverb expresses it, put the cart before the horse. For if the formation of a country choir be a difficult task the appointment of a leader is much more so. The limited population of our rural districts

renders it impossible for a professional musician to secure a competence in such localities, and drives into the towns the more educated and progressive men of business from whose ranks the best of our amateur choirmasters are drawn. Hence the country choirmaster, unless he be a visitor from a neighbouring town, is a man occupied in the same pursuits as his neighbours, but who, by some happy accident, has acquired a knowledge of music superior to that possessed by his fellow villagers. But even with this limited amount of knowledge it is surprising what good work many of our country choirmasters will accomplish. Some of them, although only ordinary working-men, will keep together a choir by the exercise of a personal influence which has been at once the object of our envy and despair, while others will hold themselves in readiness to sing almost any passage at sight, and have frequently taught themselves to accompany a simple service upon the organ or harmonium. For in the majority of cases the choirmaster has to become his own organist, since executive ability in instrumental music is rarer in the country than vocal talent. As may be expected, the weak point in the training of the country choirmaster is phrasing and expression, although the want of the latter quality is felt more in the rendering of hymns than in anthems, perhaps on account of the comparatively recent introduction of dynamic signs into our hymn-books. But if tone-quality be neglected, accuracy, precision, and tempo are frequently worthy of all praise.

The performances of a country choir are too often marred by inadequate accompaniment, limited funds not permitting the purchase of a satisfactory organ or harmonium. In many cases which have come under our observation country churches have suffered through a desire to be able to boast of the possession of a pipe organ. Very often a really useful harmonium or American organ has been sacrificed to provide funds for the purchase and erection of some worthless second-hand organ of one or even two manuals, which, in addition to being far more difficult to play than its predecessor, is constantly getting out of order, occupies far too much space, and is thoroughly unsatisfactory in tone-quality, and in means for producing variety and expression. For our own part we should like to see all these instruments sold for their value as second-hand organ materials, and the proceeds devoted to the procuring of some humbler but more serviceable instrument. In purchasing instruments our country churches need to remember that a living dog is better than a dead lion.

Like many other bodies we could name, our country choirs are often sadly victimised by their environments. Very frequently they have to sing in buildings the construction of which sets at defiance every law of acoustics, so that instead of being helped by sympathetic resonance, they are often confined in galleries close to the roof, or in such a position that sound is stifled, effect lost, and all the harshness of the instruments and voices borne directly upon the ears of the congregation. Our country choirs have not the advantage of—

the high embowed roof
With antic pillars massy proof.

And this fact should be taken into account when judging of the effect of their performances. Then, in many country churches, there is often a difficulty in providing tune books and music, and for the want of these the repertoire of the choir is limited, and is often behind the times. One effect of the "one hymn, one tune" system has been to considerably increase the price of tune books, so much so that a strong society, having for its object the granting of gifts and loans of church music to country choirs, would be an institution which would speedily justify its existence.

Among other difficulties against which our country choirs have to contend are those which affect attendance at service or rehearsal. For instance, the distance many of the members of our choirs have to walk, involves exposure to weather, and thus renders attendance uncertain. We have already alluded to constant removals, and know from experience that sickness and death are no more strangers in rural than in urban districts. Indeed, our country choirs have often to learn that while God removes His workers He still carries on His work. Then the long hours and Sunday duties of the agriculturist, even when they do not keep him from service or rehearsal, considerably dull the edge of his energies and abilities. Time being limited, little can be done to promote sight-singing; while defective education not only discourages expression and phrasing, but is detrimental to the enjoyment of good music. Hence the reason why we so often find our country choirs wasting their energies upon the feeblest and most commonplace anthems, together with hymn tunes exhibiting "a seeming plagiarism and a too-great indebtedness to American writers." Country choirs are capable of better things than Mason's anthems and Moody and Sankey's hymns. And in addition to difficulties from within, there are many from without. Some of these, such as the unsympathetic attitude of ministers and church officers, ought never to exist, but we are happy to be able to state that as far as our personal experience extends we have found our country ministers far more keenly interested in worship music than their brethren of the towns, and only too anxious to encourage their choirs in every possible way. A more serious difficulty than the unsympathetic attitude of church officials is the influence of the State Church, the whole force of which seems in some places to be concentrated upon the perversion of a Nonconformist chorister. This is a point which the Liberation Society might take up with advantage. We will not enlarge upon it here, as those of us who have had to overcome this influence know all about it and need no further enlightenment upon the matter.

For the encouragement of our country choirs much might be done. The formation of choral unions and festival services at various centres would be an excellent plan, if the men could be found to carry it into practice. The organists and choirmasters of our town churches could also do much good by taking duty for their country cousins when holidaying in country villages, and imparting a little advice and instruction which would, we believe, be gratefully received. Town choirs as a whole, or as individuals, might often give musical evenings in country churches, thus encouraging their less fortunate comrades and giving them a

chance of hearing a better class of music and a more artistic performance than could otherwise be provided.

For our country choirs are worthy of encouragement. Some of their members, it is true, may suffer from the crotchiness said to be peculiar to the musical temperament, while others make objectionable exhibitions of that little knowledge which is so dangerous a thing to its possessor. But, taken as a whole, the efforts of our country choirs are almost, if not altogether, calculated to advance the progress of true religion, to encourage our devoted country ministers, to interest the young, and to gratify the congregation. And if they enjoy average training and carefully perform good music not beyond their powers, they are not only educating and refining themselves, but elevating the artistic tone of our country congregations also. On account of the numerous impediments to their work, a few of which we have attempted to enumerate, their efforts are not always attended with that measure of success to which they are justly entitled. But they must console themselves with the reflection that future rewards are bestowed not upon those who have been successful in many things, but upon those who have been found faithful in a few.

Nonconformist Church Organs.

BUCKLAND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH.

Built by Messrs. Norman & Beard.

Great Organ.				
Open Diapason	..	..	..	8 feet.
Violin Diapason	..	..	..	8 "
Hohl Flute	..	..	..	8 "
Harmonic Flute	..	..	..	4 "
Flautina	..	..	..	2 "
Spare Slide.				
Swell Organ.				
Bourdon	..	..	..	16 "
Open Diapason	..	..	..	8 "
Rohr Flute	..	..	..	8 "
Echo Gamba	..	..	..	8 "
Voix Celeste	..	..	..	8 "
Geigen Principal	..	..	..	4 "
Mixture	..	..	..	(2 ranks)
Cornopean	..	..	..	8 feet.
Oboe	..	..	..	8 "
Choir Organ.				
Gamba	..	..	..	8 "
Clarabella	..	..	..	8 "
Flauto Traverso	..	..	..	4 "
Clarinet	..	..	..	8 "
Pedal Organ.				
Open Diapason	..	..	..	16 "
Bourdon	..	..	..	16 "
Couplers.				
Swell to Great.		Great to Pedal.		
Swell to Pedal.		Swell to Choir.		
		Choir to Pedal.		
Accessories.				
Three Composition Pedals to Swell.				
Three Composition Pedals to Great.				

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 18th of the month.)

PROVINCIAL.

BOURNEMOUTH.—The Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., commenced his ministry at Richmond Hill Congregational Church on the first Sunday in June, under conditions which augur well for his success in this most delightful southern resort. The music, under the direction of Mr. Leah, was highly satisfactory. At the morning service Smart's *Te Deum* was rendered in splendid style by the choir of nearly fifty voices, including several boys. It was particularly noticeable that in this the congregation, which filled the church, sang most heartily. The choir also sang "How lovely are the messengers" in a way which did great credit to themselves and their chief. The hymns were all sung in a manner worthy of the occasion. The time was good and the body of tone excellent. Mr. Jones' father did yeoman's service in Welsh musical circles in days gone by; the mantle must have descended in some measure, for at one time the son contemplated going up for his Mus. Bac. degree, but the pulpit engaged his greater attention, and he gave up the idea. No doubt Mr. Jones will do all in his power to assist the organist and choirmaster (Mr. Leah) to develop a musical service which may prove worthy of such an important church, and which the numerous visitors from far and near may be able to hold up as exemplary.

CANONBURY.—The last Monthly Musical Service of the present season was held at Harecourt Chapel on Sunday evening, the 12th ult., when Sir J. Stainer's cantata, *The Daughter of Jairus*, was given by the choir of about forty voices. The solos were rendered by Miss Wilmott Briggs, Mr. F. Salter, and Mr. C. May Phelps. Mr. E. Drewett, A.R.C.O., presided at the organ with his usual skill.

OSWESTRY.—The annual Cymanfa of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists was held in Zion Chapel on Sunday, May 22nd, and was conducted by Mr. J. T. Rees, Mus. Bac. The singing of the various tunes and anthems was exceedingly good. The tone produced was excellent. On May 23rd the Wrexham and Oswestry District Baptist Choral Union held their annual Festival, which was ably conducted by Mr. W. T. Samuel, of Swansea. The combined choirs sang with much precision and expression. Messrs. Sudlow and Bayley presided at the organ with efficiency. During the day addresses were given by Revs. D. M. Davies, Hobson, Thomas, and Messrs. Ledsham and E. Minshall.

OULTANE, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD.—On Sunday, the 12th ult., the anniversary of the Wesleyan Sunday-school was held, when sermons were preached, in the morning by Mr. G. Mitchell, of Netherton, and in the evening by the Rev. J. C. Harrison, of Milnsbridge. Special hymns and anthems were rendered by the choir and scholars, under the able conductorship of Mr. Eli Pilling, accompanied on the organ by Mr. J. W. Batley, along with an efficient band of string and wind instruments. The anthems at the afternoon and evening services were "Fixed in His everlasting seat" (Handel's *Samson*), and "Sing the Lord, ye voices all" (Haydn's *Creation*), in the latter of which the principal parts were beautifully rendered by Mrs. Gee (soprano), Mrs. Tweed (contralto), Mr. S. Smith (tenor), and Mr. J. W. Pilling (bass). The evening service was brought to a close by a very fine rendering of the "Hallelujah" chorus, from Handel's *Messiah*. The collections for the day amounted to over £37.

PORTSMOUTH.—A three-manual organ, erected in Buckland Congregational Church (Pastor Rev. W. C. Talbot) by Messrs. Norman and Beard, was opened on the 15th ult. In the afternoon a special service was held, when an admirable and most appropriate sermon was preached by the Rev. R. E. Clegg, of Southsea. The Pastor and the Rev. W. Tidd Matson also took part. Mr. Mudge, the organist of the church, ably presided at the organ. In the evening there was an organ recital and sacred concert, when a large congregation assembled. Mr. Minshall played several solos and accompanied throughout the evening. The choir, conducted by Mr. Mudge, sang three anthems very creditably. Mrs. W. T. Stearn, who possesses an excellent voice, sang "The Voice of the Father" (Cowen) and "Abide with Me" (Liddle), with good effect. Miss Jones, in "O Rest in the Lord" and "The Lord is My Light," gave very expressive renderings. Mr. C. E. Pillow of Chichester Cathedral, was heard to advantage in "Waft her, Angels" and "Fierce Raged the Tempest" (Liddle).

New Music.

The Bristol Chant, Anthem, and Service Book. Novello and Co., and W. Crofton Hemmons, Stephen Street, Bristol.—The Bristol Tune Book has long been known as an excellent selection of tunes. Hitherto no anthems have been issued (and a very few chants) in connection with this publication. This work therefore makes up the deficiency, and choir-masters will find here very much that will interest them, and that will prove exceedingly useful to congregations who introduce the book. The idea in compiling the music has been (1) to provide some simple music in which congregations can join; (2) pieces of greater difficulty, in which people with a fair musical knowledge can join; and (3) pieces of a more elaborate character suitable for well-trained singers only. The work is divided into several sections. First we have the Chant section. A large number of the Psalms and selected portions of Scripture are given. The pointing is simple, and ought to be easily understood by the people. For the most part it has been intelligently done. In a few cases, however, we venture to think it might be improved. For example, instead of these two instances:—

"His foundation is in the | holy | mountains,
He turneth the wilderness into a | standing | water,"

we should prefer this—

"His foundation is in the | holy | mountains,
He turneth the wilderness into a | standing | water."

The accent seems out of place on two such unimportant words as "in" and "into." The music has been well chosen, though some well-known and favourite chants have been left out. Several chants with varied accompaniments will be very popular. The Service Book contains the Suffrages, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Venite, Te Deum (chant and service settings), Jubilate, the Litany, Magnificat, Cantate Domino, Nunc Dimittis, Deus Misereatur, Kyries, Nicene Creed, Offertory Sentences, Vespers, Amens, and, strange to say, the Athanasius Creed. It will be well to transfer this to the forthcoming Church of England edition, for it is out of place in a book intended for Nonconformists. The Anthem section contains 114 pieces of various degrees of difficulty. Some of the hymn-anthems (now so popular) are very good, and will soon become favourites. Many of the other anthems are also admirable. Choirs will find here much material that ought to enrich

the services, and if sung with taste and expression should prove very helpful to devotion. The book is edited by Mr. Josiah Booth, and that is a sufficient guarantee that musicianly skill is found throughout. The work is well got up, and should quickly take root in many Nonconformist churches.

From Messrs. Robert Cocks and Co., New Burlington Street, W., we have received the following:—

The Seraph's Strain and Le Carillon for the Organ. By W. Wolstenholme.—These two very pleasing pieces form No. 14 of the Recital Series, edited by Mr. E. H. Lemare.

Mazurka Gracieuze for Piano. By G. H. Clutsum. 4s.—An effective piece, suitable for drawing-room purposes.

Coralie Gavotte. By A. Mascheroni. 3s.—Easy but pretty.

The Garden Blest. Song by F. H. Cowen. 4s.—A semi-sacred song, well worthy of study.

The Night Wind's Calling. By Laurence Kellie. 4s.—An effective song by this popular composer.

Are All the Sweet Days O'er? Song by Alice Boston. 4s.—Somewhat tame, and lacking in variety.

Remember or Forget and Love-Song. Two songs by Arthur E. Grimshaw. 4s.—Cleverly written songs—especially the latter.

The Auld Fisher. Song by W. Nicholl. 4s.—The words are by George Macdonald. The music is melodious. Singers with a taste for Scotch songs will appreciate this.

Correspondence.

TONIC SOL-FA ORGANISTS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL,

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent, "A. R. C. O." is evidently somewhat at sea as to his knowledge of the Tonic Sol-fa Notation, and the number of those who sing and play from it. When writing first, I did not intend taking up the cudgels on behalf of the method, as that is scarcely necessary, but I think "A. R. C. O.'s" remarks call for a brief notice. In the first place, I cannot conceive what need there is for a child to progress, after an elementary course in Sol-fa, to the O. N. What difference is there in one who sings, say the *Messiah*, from Sol-fa, and another who uses the O. N. edition of that work? The notes are identically the same, and are rendered the same. One thing might be added, however, and that is, that according to a lot of evidence, the Sol-faist generally sings with more confidence, as his notation is easier to read. I am willing to grant that it is a great acquisition to understand both notations, but it is equally incumbent for the Old Notationist to learn Sol-fa before he completes his musical education as it is for the Sol-faist to learn the O. N. Secondly, I know of very few choral works of any merit but what are published in Sol-fa. All the oratorios are, I believe, in Sol-fa.

My complaint is here:—publishers, to save expense, omit to print the accompaniments in the Sol-fa editions, (only the *Messiah*, and Mozart's 12th *Mass*, have accompaniments in Sol-fa), and this is not only a great drawback to the singer, but a far greater disability to the player, who is forced to translate the accompaniments from one notation to the other. I play both Bach and Guilmant (much easier from Sol-fa than I

could from the O. N.) from manuscript Sol-fa, but it is very wearisome to have to translate any pieces one wishes to play, and it entails a lot of work.

And now for one or two suggestions:—

Would it be possible to form an association of Tonic Sol-fa organists (with apologies to "A. R. C. O.") and choirmasters? What individuals cannot do singly, they might accomplish by combining together—viz: the bringing of force to bear upon the publishers to publish all their Sol-fa works complete, and not imperfect (by the omission of instrumental parts) as they do now. The issuing of a journal of Sol-fa organ and piano music monthly, is another point worthy of consideration. This periodical should contain good-class music, taken from Bach, Mendelssohn, Guilman, Wely, etc., etc., complete translations. I, for one, should be glad to subscribe largely for such a work as suggested.

I am certain, if anything can be done in the directions indicated, it would be an immense boon to a large number of Nonconformist organists.

Perhaps you, sir, will kindly allow me a little more space, after more has been said on the subject by other writers.—Faithfully yours,

OPEN DIAPASON.

To Correspondents.

YOUNG ORGANIST.—There is no hard and fast rule as to Voluntaries in the Church of England. During Lent it is the custom to play moderately subdued pieces, but for the rest of the year there is nothing in any particular season to regulate your choice.

W. E. G.—Thanks for cutting, which shall receive notice in next issue.

The following are thanked for their communications:—F. S. (Sheffield); W. B. T. (Manchester); A. D. (Reading); S. B. (Exeter); W. W. (Peckham); T. F. C. (Inverness); J. D. (Maldon); F. F. E. (Carlisle).

Staccato Notes.

A TESTIMONIAL benefit is, we learn, in contemplation for Mr. Sims Reeves, the veteran tenor, who next September will attain the ripe old age of eighty years. It is also likely that the benefit will be supplemented by a subscription, after the precedent formed in the case of Signor Mario.

THE case for the organ at Westminster Abbey has now made a further step towards final completion, the portion facing the South Aisle having been presented by Miss Beare, in memory of her brother-in-law, the late Mr. A. D. Clarke, who, it will be remembered, was the generous donor of the "Celestial" Organ.

By a resolution passed by the London School Board, pianofortes are to be supplied to every school building in which an evening school is held.

MR. J. C. HELE, F.R.C.O., member of the firm of Hele & Co., organ builders, and an active worker in the business as voicer, has just taken the degree of Mus.B. at Oxford, thus rendering his position unique as organ builder and organist (of St. Peter's Parish Church, Plymouth). Mr. J. C. Hele is nephew of Mr. John Hele, Mus.B., borough organist, Plymouth, and son of Mr. G. Hele, for the past twenty-five years organist of H.M. Royal Dockyard Church, Devonport.

A CONCERT has been given by Mr. W. Ganz in celebration of fifty years' residence in London.

MR. RICHARD LATIER, one of the most popular singing masters at the Guildhall School of Music, died on the 2nd ult.

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could from the O. N.) from manuscript Sol-fa, but it is very wearisome to have to translate any pieces one wishes to play, and it entails a lot of work.

And now for one or two suggestions:—

Would it be possible to form an association of Tonic Sol-fa *organists* (with apologies to "A. R. C. O.") and choirmasters? What individuals cannot do singly, they might accomplish by combining together—viz: the bringing of force to bear upon the publishers to publish all their Sol-fa works complete, and not imperfect (by the omission of instrumental parts) as they do now. The issuing of a journal of Sol-fa organ and piano music monthly, is another point worthy of consideration. This periodical should contain good-class music, taken from Bach, Mendelssohn, Guilmant, Wely, etc., etc., complete translations. I, for one, should be glad to subscribe largely for such a work as suggested.

I am certain, if anything can be done in the directions indicated, it would be an immense boon to a large number of Nonconformist organists.

Perhaps you, sir, will kindly allow me a little more space, after more has been said on the subject by other writers.—Faithfully yours,

OPEN DIAPASON.

To Correspondents.

YOUNG ORGANIST.—There is no hard and fast rule as to Voluntaries in the Church of England. During Lent it is the custom to play moderately subdued pieces, but for the rest of the year there is nothing in any particular season to regulate your choice.

W. E. G.—Thanks for cutting, which shall receive notice in next issue.

The following are thanked for their communications:—F. S. (Sheffield); W. B. T. (Manchester); A. D. (Reading); S. B. (Exeter); W. W. (Peckham); T. F. C. (Inverness); J. D. (Maldon); F. F. E. (Carlisle).

Staccato Notes.

A TESTIMONIAL benefit is, we learn, in contemplation for Mr. Sims Reeves, the veteran tenor, who next September will attain the ripe old age of eighty years. It is also likely that the benefit will be supplemented by a subscription, after the precedent formed in the case of Signor Mario.

THE case for the organ at Westminster Abbey has now made a further step towards final completion, the portion facing the South Aisle having been presented by Miss Beare, in memory of her brother-in-law, the late Mr. A. D. Clarke, who, it will be remembered, was the generous donor of the "Celestial" Organ.

By a resolution passed by the London School Board, pianofortes are to be supplied to every school building in which an evening school is held.

MR. J. C. HELE, F.R.C.O., member of the firm of Hele & Co., organ builders, and an active worker in the business as voicer, has just taken the degree of Mus.B. at Oxford, thus rendering his position unique as organ builder and organist (of St. Peter's Parish Church, Plymouth). Mr. J. C. Hele is nephew of Mr. John Hele, Mus.B., borough organist, Plymouth, and son of Mr. G. Hele, for the past twenty-five years organist of H.M. Royal Dockyard Church, Devonport.

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Postlude in C Minor. C. Darnton.

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Marche Nuptiale. Ernest W. Barnard.
In Memoriam. James Lyon.

January, 1897, contains—

Andantino. Arthur Berridge.
Communion. Thomas Greenhalgh.

March, 1897, contains—

March Pomposo. Arthur Berridge.
Prayer. Bruce Steane.

May, 1897, contains—

Offertoire in G. Millward Hughes.
Cradle Song. Bruce Steane.

July, 1897, contains—

Andante. Kate C. Smith.
Marche Jubilante. Bruce Steane.

September, 1897, contains—

"Adeste Fideles," with Variations. Ernest H. Smith, F.R.C.O.
Cantilena. James Lyon.

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